# UK urged to cut meat consumption for climate goals



People in the UK are being urged to reduce their meat consumption by 260 grams per week as part of a broader strategy to help the country meet its emissions targets, according to the Climate Change Committee (CCC). This advisory body, consisting of climate experts, has published its seventh Carbon Budget, which provides recommendations for the government to ensure the UK remains within climate limits and works towards achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

The CCC's report outlines what it considers a cost-effective approach to reducing emissions, indicating that lifestyle changes will be essential. The recommendation to cut meat consumption by 260 grams weekly translates to about the equivalent of two doner kebabs or two full English breakfasts. The committee aims for a substantial 25 percent reduction in overall meat consumption by 2040, compared to 2019 levels, and a 35 percent drop by 2050. For red meat, this reduction needs to be even more significant, with a target set at 40 percent by 2050.

Emily Nurse, head of net zero at the CCC, emphasised that the committee is “absolutely not saying everyone needs to be vegan” but does anticipate a significant shift in dietary habits. Alongside meat reductions, the report advocates for various other behavioural changes, including decreasing reliance on gas boilers, increasing the use of public transport and cycling, and enhancing home insulation.

Animal farming is highlighted as a major contributor to environmental degradation. Methane emissions, especially from ruminant animals like cows, are identified as a key environmental concern, given that methane is 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide over a two-decade period. The sector is also responsible for deforestation, biodiversity loss, and species extinction because large areas of land are converted for animal feed production and livestock farming, leading to the destruction of vital carbon sinks.

Research suggests that individuals adopting a fully plant-based diet could be making the largest impact on their environmental footprint. A study published in 2023 claims that a vegan diet can lead to a 75 percent reduction in climate heating emissions, reduced water pollution, and lower land use, while also significantly decreasing wildlife destruction and water consumption.

Some environmental advocates have suggested that the CCC's recommendations do not go far enough in addressing meat-related emissions. The Vegan Society has expressed a desire for stronger targets, citing the health benefits of plant-based diets as well as potential savings for the National Health Service (NHS). Rachel Higgins from the animal advocacy group Viva! expressed a similar sentiment, noting disappointment at the lack of increased reduction targets since the previous Carbon Budget, although she welcomed the stricter target for red meat.

Both the Vegan Society and Viva! have encouraged the government to take decisive action in response to the CCC's findings, suggesting that it has a unique opportunity to implement practical policies aimed at promoting dietary changes. These could include instituting plant-based options as defaults in public sector menus, supporting farmers focused on sustainable plant protein production, and raising public awareness about the benefits of plant-based foods through health campaigns.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/news/reduction-in-uk-red-and-processed-meat-intake-but-more-needed-to-meet-our-climate-targets> - This article supports the claim that reducing meat consumption, particularly red and processed meat, is crucial for environmental sustainability and aligns with health recommendations. It highlights the need for further reductions to meet climate targets.
* <https://www.ciwf.org.uk/media/3817742/global-benefits-of-eating-less-meat.pdf> - This document discusses the global benefits of reducing meat consumption, including environmental and health advantages, which aligns with the CCC's recommendations for lifestyle changes.
* <https://www.justice.gov/opcl/overview-privacy-act-1974-2020-edition/disclosures-third-parties> - Although not directly related to the CCC's report, this link provides context on legal frameworks that might influence policy discussions around environmental and health data.
* <https://omni.pet/blogs/news/uk-meat-intake-sees-record-lows-since-1974> - This article supports the trend of decreasing meat consumption in the UK, highlighting factors such as cost and environmental awareness. It also mentions the UK's efforts to reduce meat intake for sustainability.
* <https://www.vacourts.gov/courts/scv/rulesofcourt.pdf> - This document is unrelated to the specific claims about meat consumption but provides a legal context that might be relevant in policy discussions around environmental regulations.